

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-based document retrieval method,  
comprising the steps of:

5           receiving a seed document entered by a user;

          memorizing first characteristic terms extracted  
from said seed document;

          memorizing second characteristic terms extracted  
from the result of a document search process performed on  
10   said seed document; and

          displaying the difference between said first  
characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms  
on screen.

2. A program for executing a method for electronic  
15   document retrieval, wherein said method comprises the steps  
of:

          receiving a seed document entered by a user;

          memorizing first characteristic terms extracted  
from said seed document;

20           memorizing second characteristic terms extracted  
from the result of a document search process performed on  
said seed document; and

displaying the difference between said first characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms on screen.

3. An electronic document retrieval system,  
5 comprising:

means for receiving a seed document entered by a user;

means for memorizing first characteristic terms extracted from said seed document and second characteristic  
10 terms extracted from the result of a document search process; and

means for displaying the difference between said first characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms on screen.

15 4. A computer-based document retrieval method, comprising the steps of:

memorizing first characteristic terms extracted from the result of a first search process;

memorizing second characteristic terms extracted  
20 from the result of a second search process which is performed on the result of said first search process;

comparing said first characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms; and

displaying the result of said comparison on screen.

5. A computer-based document retrieval method,  
comprising the steps of:

displaying characteristic terms extracted from the  
result of a document search process on screen;

5 receiving a user's instruction for selecting said  
displayed characteristic terms; and

memorizing the received instruction for selecting  
said characteristic terms.

6. A computer-based document retrieval method,  
10 comprising the steps of:

causing thesaurus category information, which is  
stored in a storage device beforehand, to appear on screen;

receiving a user's instruction for selecting said  
displayed thesaurus category information; and

15 performing a document search process in accordance  
with the received instruction for selecting said thesaurus  
category information.

7. A computer-based document retrieval method,  
comprising the steps of:

20 receiving first characteristic terms from a user;

performing a search process on said first  
characteristic terms and displaying the result of said  
search process on screen;

receiving second characteristic terms which are entered by the user in accordance with the result of said search process;

comparing said first characteristic terms and said  
5 second characteristic terms; and

displaying the result of said comparison on screen.

8. A document retrieval support method according to claim 7, wherein displayed characteristic terms classified solely as said second characteristic terms are  
10 differentiated from the other characteristic terms when said first characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms are compared.

9. The document retrieval support method according to claim 7, wherein characteristic terms classified solely  
15 as said second characteristic terms are assigned an increased weight setting when said first characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms are compared.

10. A computer-based document retrieval method, comprising the steps of:

20 receiving first characteristic terms entered by a user;

performing a first search process on said first characteristic terms and displaying the result of said first search process on screen;

receiving second characteristic terms which are entered by the user in accordance with the displayed result of said first search process;

5 comparing said first characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms; and

performing a second search process in accordance with the result of said comparison.

11. The document retrieval method according to claim 10, wherein said second search process performed in accordance with the result of said comparison comprises the steps of:

15 memorizing, as third characteristic terms, the characteristic terms that are not listed as said first characteristic terms but are listed as said second characteristic terms;

assigning relatively great weights to said third characteristic terms; and

20 performing said second search process in accordance with said second characteristic terms and said third characteristic terms.

12. A computer-readable storage medium storing a program for executing a computer-based document retrieval method, wherein said method comprises the steps of:

receiving a seed document entered by a user;

memorizing first characteristic terms extracted  
from said seed document;

memorizing second characteristic terms extracted  
from the result of a document search process performed on  
5 said seed document; and

displaying the difference between said first  
characteristic terms and said second characteristic terms  
on screen.